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Activities not classified by field: coordination and integration of statistical programmes

Report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on its first and second meetings**

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-fourth session,*** the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on its first (New York, 3 March 2003) and second (Geneva, 8-10 September 2003) meetings. The Commission may wish to take into account in its discussion under relevant agenda items the views expressed by the Committee. A list of the relevant agenda items and paragraphs of the present report follows:

Agenda item	*Title*	*Relevant paragraph(s)*
4 (c)	Tourism statistics	27 (II)[a]
6 (a)	Implementation of the fundamental principles of Official Statistics	11-15 (II)
6 (c)	Indicators	4-10, 28 (II)
6 (e)	Presentation of statistical data and metadata	17-20 (II)
6 (f)	Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata	26 (II)
6 (i)	Coordination and integration of statistical programmes	4, annex IV (I) 11-15 (II)

[a] I = report on the first meeting.
II = report on the second meeting.

* E/CN.3/2004/1.

** The report was submitted late with respect to the forecast submission date according to the slotting system, due to necessary consultations within the Secretariat and among United Nations agencies.

*** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 4* (E/2003/24), chap. V.E.

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Part One

Report of the first meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 3 March 2003)

I. Introduction

1. Following the decision[1] taken by the inter-agency meeting on coordination of statistical activities on 19 September 2002, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities held its first meeting in New York on 3 March 2003. The agenda of the meeting is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III to the present report.

II. Work of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

2. The meeting was chaired by Andrew Flatt, Director of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). In opening the meeting, Mr. Flatt introduced the agenda and presented the points for discussion.

B. Adoption of the agenda

3. The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in annex I to the present report.

C. Working mechanism for the Committee

4. The Committee considered the proposed terms of reference as laid out in document SA/2003/2. After a discussion focusing primarily on participation in the Committee, working methods, intersessional activities and the form of the reporting, the Committee adopted its terms of reference, as orally amended. The approved final version is contained in annex IV to the present report.

D. Agenda of the proposed second meeting in Geneva (9-11 September 2003)

5. The Committee decided to hold its second meeting in Geneva from 8 to 10 September 2003, instead of 9-11 September 2003, and gratefully accepted the offer of the International Labour Organization (ILO) to host the meeting. The Committee also agreed with the plan of ILO to conduct a half-day technical seminar[2] on "Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates" as part of the second meeting.

6. The Committee requested that for future meetings a clear distinction should be made between agenda items that were for decision, such as the adoption of guidelines or best practices, agenda items that were for discussion and agenda items that primarily served the purpose of information exchange between agencies. The Committee also decided to give priority in the agenda to issues of a strategic dimension, which were of concern to a critical mass of interested parties among the Committee members. The Committee requested the authors of documents for future meetings to identify clearly whether a document was for decision, discussion or for

information, and in the first case to include specific recommendations in the document.

7. Regarding the agenda for the second meeting, the Committee accepted the proposal to add the topics "Statistics at the subnational level" (lead agency United Nations Human Settlements Programme) and "Towards a statistical system" (lead agency Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)) to the list of issues to be considered.[3] Furthermore, it requested all lead agencies to prepare a brief annotation for each proposed agenda item. The agenda for the second meeting of the Committee and its structure would then be finalized under the leadership of the Chair after an electronic round of discussion on the annotated list of topics.

E. Other business

8. The meeting took note of the joint report by the United Nations Statistics Division and ECE on the analysis of outputs for the biennium 2004-2005 for organizations members of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs.[4] In that context the Committee requested the Secretariat to circulate to members of the Committee information on earlier "peer reviews" that had been carried out. The Committee also took note of the Statistics Division's announcement of the calendar for the finalization of the second annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals.

Notes

[1] E/CN.3/2003/25, para. 28.

[2] See SA/2003/5.

[3] See SA/2003/3.

[4] SA/2003/4.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Working mechanism for the Committee.
3. Agenda for the proposed second meeting in Geneva (9-11 September 2003).
4. Other business:
   (a) United Nations proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005;
   (b) 2003 report on Millennium Development Goals.

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations entities and programmes

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	
United Nations Statistics Division	Willem F. M. De Vries Richard Roberts Stefan Schweinfest (Secretary) Robert Johnston Mary Chamie Eszter Horvath Ivo Havinga Grace Bediako Jeremiah Banda Francesca Perucci Gisele Kamanou-Goune Sabine Warschburger
Population Division	Larry Heligman
Economic Assessment and Prospects Unit	Anatoly Smyshlyaev
Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries	Oumar Diallo
Division for Social Policy and Development	Felice Llamas
Economic Commission for Europe	Heinrich Bruengger
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Andrew Flatt (Chairman)
Economic Commission for Africa	Malik Sy Oumar
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Mariam Al Awadhi
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Hubert Escaith
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Henri Laurencin
United Nations Development Programme	Haishan Fu Tom Griffin
United Nations Human Settlements Programme	Nefise Bazoglu Eduardo Moreno
United Nations Children's Fund	Gareth Jones
United Nations Population Fund	Koutoum Nacro

Specialized agencies and related organizations	
International Labour Organization	Sylvester Young
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Haluk Kasnakoglu
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Doug Drew
World Bank	Shaida Badiee
International Monetary Fund	Carol Carson
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Tetsuo Yamada
Other international and non-governmental organizations	
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	Enrico Giovannini
World Tourism Organization	Antonio Massieu
World Trade Organization	Roslyn Jackson
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	Mikhail A. Korolev

Annex III

List of documents

Symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
SA/2003/1	1	Provisional agenda
SA/2003/2	2	Terms of reference for the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities
SA/2003/3	3	Proposed agenda for the second meeting of the Committee, Geneva, 9-11 September 2003
SA/2003/4	4 (a)	Analysis of outputs for 2004-2005: organizations that are members of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs: joint report by the United Nations Statistics Division and ECE
SA/2003/5	4 (b)	Technical seminar on methodologies for regional and global estimation — A proposal by ILO
SA/2003/6		Report of the first meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (New York, 3 March 2003)
–		List of participants
–		Proposal for a new agenda tabled by the World Tourism Organization

Annex IV

Terms of reference of the Committee

1. The inter-agency Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities was established on 19 September 2002 by the inter-agency meeting on coordination of statistical activities. Its objectives, which are similar to those of the former Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), with the addition of sub-item (d), are:

(a) To promote coordination, integration and complementarity among the statistical programmes of the international organizations, including the avoidance of duplication and reduction in reporting burdens on member States and to promote coordination and consistency in statistical practices and development;

(b) To provide coordinated preparation for the treatment of statistical issues at intergovernmental meetings, including those of the Statistical Commission, and coordinated follow-up of decisions of the intergovernmental bodies, thus providing a responsive focus for addressing the needs of Member States;

(c) To achieve through the coordination activity an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics by promoting the coordination of the international official statistical system, including technical cooperation in statistics; and to facilitate the use in member States of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, recommendations and classifications of different international organizations by coordinating the work on methodological development and promoting harmonization of the methodologies in various fields of statistics;

(d) To foster good practices in the structuring and programming of statistical activities in the international organizations; within the above framework the Committee focuses on emerging issues requiring coordination, takes a proactive approach and follows up on decisions to ensure that action is taken.

2. The members of the Committee comprise all members and observers of the former ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, namely the United Nations Statistics Division and other divisions of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the regional commissions, the United Nations programmes and funds, the specialized agencies and related organizations, certain non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization), regional development banks and the International Statistical Institute. Other organizations can participate by invitation.

3. Representation in the Committee is normally at the level of Director of an organization's statistical service or equivalent. Participation at the highest statistical level is considered indispensable for the effectiveness of the Committee's work.

4. The Committee functions on a task-oriented basis using lead agency arrangements. The Committee meets on an ad hoc basis as required by circumstances, usually for two and a half days, but the decision to hold meetings and their length is driven by substance and needs. In principle it is expected that there will be annual meetings, but advantage will be taken of the Statistical Commission session each year to bring the Committee together to take up any issues that need to

be considered at that time and to review the proposed agenda and need for the next scheduled Committee meeting. As formal Committee meetings provide an excellent opportunity for bilateral and multilateral discussions and networking, sufficient time should always be set aside in the meeting schedule for these activities. Coordination of activities between meetings, for instance through electronic discussion groups and follow-up to decisions made at meetings, are an important and integral part of the work of the Committee.

5. The Committee elects a Chairman who serves for a two-year period and is eligible for re-election for a second two-year term. The United Nations Statistics Division is the permanent secretariat.

6. A decisions-and-actions-only report is prepared for adoption at the end of each meeting. The report should specify the lead agencies which are responsible for any action and follow-up. There should also be a report on ongoing Committee activities which have occurred in the inter-meeting period. An annual report is made available to the United Nations Statistical Commission and if necessary or desirable the report is referred to the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

Part Two

Report of the second meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (Geneva, 8-10 September 2003)

I. Introduction

1. The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities held its second meeting at the International Labour Office (ILO) in Geneva from 8 to 10 September 2003. The agenda of the meeting is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III, to the present report.

II. Work of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

2. The meeting was chaired by Andrew Flatt, Director of the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP). In opening the meeting, Mr. Flatt, on behalf of the Committee, thanked ILO for hosting the meeting.

B. Adoption of the agenda

3. The Committee adopted the agenda as set out in annex I, to the present report.

C. Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates

4. The Committee welcomed the report on the topic,[1] which had been commissioned by the International Labour Office in cooperation with the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In particular the Committee commended the author, Tim Holt, for the thorough analysis of the relevant issues and for developing a detailed list of specific suggestions.

5. The Committee agreed with the recommendations on the need for good documentation for all Millennium Development Goal indicators (suggestion 1), clear time attribution (suggestion 3) and use of a uniform regional classification for Millennium Development Goal aggregates (suggestion 4), although mention was also made of the persistent problem of diverging regional country classifications in the wider United Nations system. With respect to accessibility of microdata (suggestion 2), members of the Committee suggested qualifying the recommendation by taking into account legal and financial limitations. The responsibility of the primary collector to make data accessible was also stressed.

6. There was no uniform view in the Committee on the principles of imputations (suggestions 5-8), including the question of whether to use implicit or explicit imputations for missing country data. The members of the Committee acknowledged that agencies currently followed different practices, sometimes even within agencies, for different data series. Different practices are motivated by: (a)

differences in the institutional legal frameworks, (b) different degrees of political challenges and (c) different perceptions about the intended use of certain indicators. Some members pointed out that explicit imputations forced agencies to be more transparent, that they were helpful in recalculating regional groupings and that within the context of the Millennium Development Goals all countries had made a commitment to produce national data. While some members emphasized the need to cooperate with national statistical offices on imputations, others felt that imputations generally created disincentives to make the necessary investments in statistics at the national level.

7. With respect to specific imputation techniques (suggestions 9-12), the Committee agreed that those issues needed to be carefully considered by the technical experts in charge of producing Millennium Development Goal series. For such a review the Committee encouraged the experts to seek technical inputs from a larger constituency of experts, including academia, possibly in the form of a "virtual expert group on imputation". In that context the need for a clear strategic decision on the frequency of producing indicators/imputations was emphasized.

8. In its discussion on recommendations referring to aggregation techniques (suggestions 13-20), the Committee focused on the issue of estimating trends as one of the key elements of the Millennium Development Goal monitoring process. In that context, the World Health Organization (WHO) informed the members of the Committee that WHO was developing a model with UNICEF to directly estimate trends for maternal mortality. Due to the widespread political attention to Millennium Development Goals, the need for producing easily understandable trend estimates was emphasized. Some Committee members raised questions about the principle of using extrapolation techniques based on past trends, as the Goals explicitly aimed at changing trends through policy interventions.

9. The Committee decided that, in order to endorse a set of specific recommendations, further work was needed. In particular, a distinction needed to be made between more technical issues and issues of a strategic nature. The frequency of producing data, the corresponding development of data sources (surveys, administrative sources) and the resource allocation between national and international reporting were identified as issues of a strategic nature, which required attention at a higher level. This was considered all the more pressing, as the Committee agreed that the Millennium Development Goals provided a unique opportunity to both build capacity at the national level and improve cooperation at the international level.

10. The Committee welcomed the World Bank's offer to provide the necessary resources to enable Professor Holt to further develop the set of recommendations elaborated in his report and agreed that he would need clear terms of reference and the input of Committee members in that task. In that context also, the Committee requested the forthcoming inter-agency technical meeting on Millennium Development Goals to discuss and review the recommendations contained in the report. The Committee also requested the Statistics Division to develop, in close consultation with other international agencies, a proposal for addressing the strategic issues mentioned in paragraph 9, to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

D. Towards a statistical system

11. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) for the preparation of the report on the topic.[2] Many Committee members agreed during the discussion that the current international cooperation arrangements regarding statistics, centring around the United Nations Statistical Commission, could be characterized as a "system", albeit a decentralized and loose one, which was primarily based on strong and shared professional ethics.

12. Members of the Committee concurred that there was room for improvement of the current cooperation arrangements in areas such as shared data management, development of concepts and methods as well as technical cooperation. However, some members expressed reservations as to whether the vision of a rules-based governance structure for an international statistical system as outlined in the ECE report could be realized. The absence of a common decision-making intergovernmental body was mentioned as the main impediment. In particular, statistical units in specialized agencies shared their difficulties in convincing their senior management why a strong commitment to an international statistical system could be beneficial for their respective organizations. Some Committee members also referred to unsuccessful attempts in creating statistical systems at a regional or subregional level as member States did not wish to delegate authority.

13. Still, Committee members who supported the idea of an international statistical system emphasized that two factors created a unique opportunity, if not an imperative, to move towards such a system, based on explicit principles and guidelines: (a) the arrival of new technologies, which increased efficiency at both national and international levels and allowed a rethinking of the current division of labour, and (b) the unprecedented level of demand for international statistics. In that context the importance of a framework of quality assurance was mentioned as an indispensable precondition for effective datasharing.

14. While it was recognized that the fundamental principles of official statistics were designed for the national context and were thus not directly applicable to the international statistical organizations, it was observed that the fundamental principles could serve, if not as a basis, then as a starting point for developing an improved international statistical system. In fact, the Committee decided that all agencies should evaluate themselves with the help of the questionnaire on the implementation of the fundamental principles already disseminated by the Statistics Division to national statistical offices.

15. The Committee also agreed that it would be useful, for future dialogue with users, to draft a "declaration of principles for statistical activities in international organizations", which would codify issues such as: (a) confidentiality, (b) need for user consultation, (c) need for cooperation among the agencies, (d) drive for effectiveness and efficiency, (e) avoidance of duplication, (f) staff development and professional standards, (g) statistical integrity and (h) statistical organization. The Committee appointed a drafting committee, consisting of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNESCO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), ECE, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO/OMC), the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), the UNSD (Chair) and Mr. Tom Griffin, and requested it to prepare and circulate, by November 2003, a first outline of the declaration of principles with a view to presenting a more elaborate version to the Committee at the next meeting. To gain broad legitimacy and recognition at a higher level, the declaration of principles will be presented to

the Statistical Commission and additional forums, such as governing bodies, ministerial conferences governing specialized agencies, the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Conference of the International Statistical Institute.

E. Harmonization of base years for index numbers

16. The Committee welcomed the report on the topic, which had been prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).[3] The Committee adopted the recommendation contained in the report, that international organizations should start the rebasement of their index numbers using 2000 as base year and that they should implement this process by the end of 2005, subject to the availability of data. Recognizing potential problems with respect to legal frameworks, or intra-institutional competencies, the Committee requested all members to report to the Committee at its next meeting on the extent of their implementation of this recommendation.

F. Proposal for the development of international guidelines for the presentation of statistical data and metadata

17. The Committee welcomed the report on the topic,[4] which had been prepared by OECD and contained a draft working document which presented the outline for the proposed manual in more detail. The proposed guidelines were considered to be a timely contribution to current general efforts to improve data quality dimensions. The important connection of this project with the SDMX initiative (see para. 26) was stressed. As possible additional aspects to be addressed in the manual, Committee members suggested: (a) the need for maintaining classifications, including historical records of classifications; (b) extensive bibliographic references to the relevant academic body of work; and (c) explicit templates for metadata presentations. While the potential need was recognized for different presentations depending on the media of dissemination, it was also suggested commonalities in presentations should be emphasized, rather than differences. The need to develop adequate training materials based on the guidelines for use in a workshop for developing countries was also stressed.

18. The members of the Committee committed themselves to provide OECD with (a) a list of relevant reference materials of their institutions, (b) further comments and (c) the names of agency contact persons, in order to support OECD in its effort to finalize its report for presentation to the Statistical Commission in March 2004 as well as to advance the work on the handbook.

G. Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices

19. The Committee considered the report on the topic,[5] which had been prepared by UNESCO. It stressed the importance of good citations of data sets, especially given the increasing use of electronic data dissemination. In that context, the need to educate users and data retailers about good practices was also emphasized, in particular with respect to the correct attribution of data sources. Documented good practices for citation were considered useful for this purpose.

20. The Committee encouraged its members to review their author manuals and citation standards in particular with respect to the Web-disseminated databases, with a view to developing explicit citation policies where they did not exist and ensuring their implementation, where they did exist. Furthermore the Committee encouraged

UNESCO to integrate its work on good practices in citation into the proposed manual on presentation of statistical data and metadata and to include relevant materials in the Statistical Division's web site of good practices.

H. Strengthening governance of statistical systems

21. The Committee considered the report on the topic,[6] which had been prepared by IMF and presented a set of eight good practices related to data revision policies. The good practices were inspired by the fundamental principles of official statistics and aimed at enhancing the credibility of statistical systems. The members of the Committee welcomed the work on the recommendations and suggested wider dissemination of the document for comments, for example through the Statistics Division web site on good practices. The Committee also made a number of suggestions for additional aspects to be incorporated into the document, such as: (a) incorporating issues pertaining to social and demographic statistics, (b) addressing explicitly the international perspective of regional and global aggregates, (c) emphasizing the need for proper archiving of old series and (d) analysing the financial and legal implications of revisions. The Committee agreed that the management of errors was a particularly sensitive, though important topic.

22. IMF requested the support of the Committee members in vetting the applicability of the recommendations in the socio-demographic field. It informed the members that a revised version of the document would be made available for the meeting of the IMF Balance of Payments Committee in January 2004. OECD offered its high-level-group meeting in April 2004 as a potential further forum for discussion.

I. Statistics at the subnational level

23. As the representative from United Nations Human Settlements Programme was unable to attend the meeting, the Committee decided to postpone consideration of this item to a future meeting.

J. Major new initiatives planned by organizations

24. In presenting new initiatives and plans for forthcoming events and activities, many Committee members referred to their respective web sites for further details. **ILO** drew attention to the forthcoming International Conference of Labour Statisticians (24 November-3 December 2003) as well as to the intention of ILO to develop a data collection and dissemination strategy; the **United Nations Statistics Division** announced the launch of its new newsletter for November 2003. **WHO** referred to its work on the Health Metrics Network to strengthen health information systems. **UNESCO** announced a forthcoming report to the Statistical Commission on its review of science and technology data. UNESCO also referred to: (a) its work with the United States Agency for International Development and UNICEF on the use of household data, (b) its primary school survey programme and (c) its proceedings of a cultural statistics symposium. **OECD** presented its brochure on its 2003 programme, including, among other areas, international migration, System of National Accounts review, data dissemination, services statistics and e-government. **ECE** highlighted its programme on a gender statistics database and on the measurement of sustainable development. ECE also announced two projects to capture data on multinational enterprises and to develop good practices for making microdata accessible for researchers. **FAO** announced the formation of an

international advisory board, which will first meet in April 2004. FAO has moreover started to modernize FAOSTAT and intends to launch Country-Stat as a facility to exchange data and coordinate statistical activities. The **World Bank** highlighted its work programme on the International Comparison Program (ICP), the global trust fund for statistical capacity-building and its support of the Millennium Development Goal indicators, in particular its common efforts with PARIS21 to measure country capacity to produce the indicators. The **Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean** briefed the Committee on the various components of its work programme to 2005, approved by the Conference of the Statisticians of the Americas in June 2003. **ESCAP** announced its focus on poverty statistics and an overhaul of its dissemination strategy. The **Word Trade Organization/OMC** reported on its cooperation with the World Bank in developing a training module on trade in services. The **Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia** announced that its 2004-2005 programme would focus on national accounts, ICP and social statistics; the **Economic Commission for Africa** reported on the recent meeting of its Committee for Development Information and the intention to develop a strategic framework for ECA addressing also the revitalization of its statistical databases. The **Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States** referred to its cooperation with the SDMX initiative and announced the forthcoming session of council heads of statistical offices. **IMF** shared its experience in preparing booklets reviewing past activities and outlining future plans for the annual IMF meetings, which had proved a good vehicle for dialogue with countries. **PARIS21** announced that its evaluation report was now posted on the Web. Furthermore, PARIS21 reported on its plans for the new work programme for 2003-2006. **UNCTAD** briefed the Committee on the activities of an ongoing expert group on the measurement of e-commerce. **UNDP** announced that the 2004 theme for its *Human Development Report* would be "cultural diversity".

K. Issues related to the work of the task forces and inter-secretariat working groups

25. For the Intersecretariat Working Group on Prices, ILO reported that the consumer price manual was in the formal editing stages; with respect to the planned producer price manual, preparatory work, including a workshop in South Africa, was ongoing. The chair of the Group would rotate to IMF. For the Task Force on Finance Statistics, IMF reported that the group was working on training materials for external debt statistics. Representing the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, the World Trade Organization reported that a common trade data set would be on the Web before the end of 2003. With respect to the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts, the United Nations Statistics Division as the secretariat reported that the five sponsor organizations were currently working on governing and financial arrangements for the process leading to an SNA 1993 Rev.1 by 2008. Speaking for the Inter-Agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, OECD announced that some guidance material for compilation using the modular approach was now available on the Web.

L. Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative

26. The Committee was given an oral update by the representative of IMF on the progress of the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative and its four sub-projects on batch transmission, vocabulary, metadata repository and a practical case study on external debt statistics. A detailed report will be presented to the Statistical Commission at its March 2004 session. The representative of IMF also announced that OECD would be the next chair of SDMX. UNESCO expressed its interest in exploring with the SDMX members the possibility of its participation with its social statistics data sets.

M. Development of tourism statistics

27. The representative of the World Tourism Organization introduced a report it had prepared,[7] which described its current programme as well as planned activities for the period 2004-2006 in the areas of developing standards, promoting implementation of standards and disseminating tourism statistics. The Committee noted the organization's current focus on improving national data and metadata. With respect to further development of standards, the Committee welcomed the organization's intention to consult extensively with other agencies through appropriate forums such as expert groups and possibly an inter-secretariat working group, in order to ensure consistency with related frameworks, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), the Central Product Classification (CPC) and Balance of Payments (BOP). The World Tourism Organization would take into account further comments on its report received by Committee members in the following weeks before finalizing the document for submission to the Statistical Commission.

N. Improving the quality of data used for indicators for the Millennium Development Goals and targets

28. In discussing the report of the Statistics Division,[8] the Committee took note of the Division's announcement that it would jointly organize an inter-agency technical meeting on Millennium Development Goal indicators with UNDP and ECE to be held at Geneva from 10 to 13 November 2003. The purpose of the meeting would be: (a) to examine those indicators where concepts and methods and, consequently, metadata were weak, (b) to discuss possible modifications of the indicator framework as a consequence of recent conferences, and (c) to prepare for the 2005 comprehensive progress report. Members of the Committee encouraged the Division also to include in the agenda such issues as frequency of reporting, the relation between national and international Millennium Development Goal reports as well as the coordination of emerging programmes of statistical capacity-building programmes at the country level.

O. Coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter

29. The meeting took note of the examples cited by the Statistics Division in its report[9] of formal arrangements to ensure consistency in the dissemination of data by different organizations. While welcoming these individual efforts, the Committee emphasized that the issue had to be seen in the larger context of developing an improved international statistical system of shared data management. Mention was also made of the importance of anticipating potential future problems of conflicting

data dissemination, for instance in the context of the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society. Three specific areas were proposed for future attention of the Committee: consumer price indices, human rights statistics, and energy use indicators.

P. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission

30. The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare the report to the Statistical Commission based on the two meeting reports of the Committee in 2003.

Q. Other business

31. OECD suggested that the Committee, at the forthcoming Q2004 European Conference on Quality and Methodology for Official Statistics, to be sponsored by the European Union and hosted by Germany in Mainz from 24 to 26 May 2004, convene a satellite conference on quality management of international statistics. The Committee welcomed the proposal and asked OECD and the Statistics Division to liaise with the sponsors and hosts of the Q2004 meeting regarding the logistical arrangements and to form a small programme committee to prepare such a satellite conference substantively.

32. With respect to the next meeting of the Committee, the members agreed with the proposal of the Statistical Division to convene it in the afternoon of Monday, 1 March 2004, immediately preceding the Statistical Commission session. Issues to be discussed are: (a) implementation note on the harmonization of the base years for index numbers; (b) draft declaration of principles; (c) strategic issues related to Millennium Development Goal indicators, (d) preparation for the Q2004 satellite conference; (e) agenda for the 2004 fall meeting; (f) WHO Friends of the Chair Statistical Commission report and its implications for the Committee. Regarding the venue and the date for the fall 2004 meeting, the tentative suggestion was made to hold the meeting in New York from 6 to 8 September 2004.

Notes

[1] SA/2003/8.

[2] SA/2003/9.

[3] SA/2003/10.

[4] SA/2003/11.

[5] SA/2003/12.

[6] SA/2003/13.

[7] SA/2003/16.

[8] SA/2003/17.

[9] SA/2003/18.

Annex I

Agenda

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Special half-day technical seminar: Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates.
4. Towards a statistical system.
5. Harmonization of base years for index numbers.
6. Proposal for the development of international guidelines for the presentation of statistical data and metadata.
7. Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices.
8. Strengthening governance of statistical systems.
9. Statistics at the subnational level.
10. Information items:
    (a) Major new initiatives planned by organizations;
    (b) Issues related to the work of the task forces and inter-secretariat working groups;
    (c) Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative;
    (d) Development of tourism statistics;
    (e) Improving the quality of data used for indicators for the Millennium Development Goals and targets;
    (f) Coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter;
    (g) Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission.
11. Other business.
12. Report of the meeting.

Annex II

List of participants

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Annex III

List of documents

Document No	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
SA/2003/7	2	Provisional agenda
SA/2003/8	3	Aggregation of national data to regional and global estimates: report by Tim Holt (ILO Consultant)
SA/2003/9	4	Towards a statistical system: report by ECE
SA/2003/10	5	Harmonization of base years for index numbers: report by UNCTAD
SA/2003/11	6	Proposal for the development of international guidelines for the presentation of statistical data and metadata: report by OECD
SA/2003/12	7	The citation of datasets: report by UNESCO
SA/2003/13	8	Revisions policy for official statistics: a matter of governance: report by IMF
SA/2003/14	9	Statistics at the subnational level: report by Human Settlements Programme *(not issued)*
SA/2003/15	10(c)	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative: Challenges and opportunities: Powerpoint presentation by IMF
SA/2003/15/Add.1	10(c)	Overview of the metadata common vocabulary: report by OECD
SA/2003/16	10(d)	Development of tourism statistics: report by the World Tourism Organization
SA/2003/17	10(e)	Progress report on the development of indicators for monitoring implementation of the Millennium Development Goals: report by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2003/18	10(f)	Coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter: report by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2003/19	12	Report of the second meeting of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (Geneva, 8-10 September 2003)
–	6	Draft data and metadata presentation manual

Document No.	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
—	10(a)	Highlights of the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics: the role of international organizations
ESA/STAT/AC.88/04	10(a)	Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Setting the Scope of Social Statistics, New York, 6-9 May 2003
—		List of participants